

Century Building - Gem Theatre

Address: 333 Madison

Local

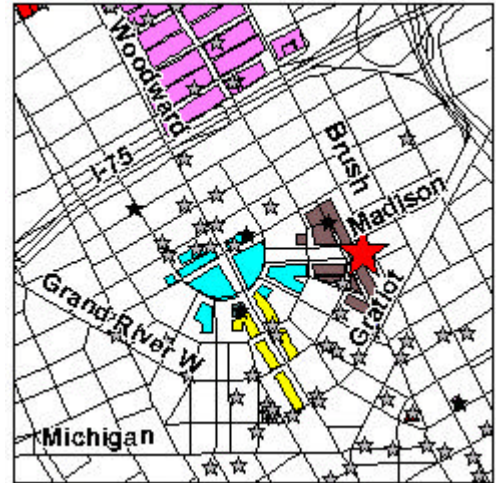
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Century Club & Gem Theatre, 2003



Historic Overview:

The Century Building was the first building to be commissioned in Detroit by women for the specific use by societies exclusively for women. From 1903 to the mid-1930s, the building was used by the Twentieth Century Association membership as a meeting place for women involved with a variety of issues such as welfare reform, prison conditions, and child labor as well as a cultural center for women which housed performances and lectures often featuring well known personalities. The theater was constructed in answer to a need for a forum in which to host noted women speakers on a wide range of topics and other club events. The theater was leased to the Motion Picture Guild, a group formed in 1926 in Washington, D.C. to show artistic films created in foreign markets. The first films were shown on September 14, 1928, probably marking the first time foreign films had been shown in Detroit. The theater went through six name and ownership changes before it was closed in 1975. The Twentieth Century Club dissipated in the mid-1930s and the building had a series of owners until it was vacated in 1960. In 1997, the building was moved from its location on East Columbia four blocks east to Madison to make way for the construction for the new Detroit Tigers and Lions stadiums. The theater has since re-opened.

Text as Written on Woodward Heritage.com

